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2018 Year in Review

The year 2018 was a major turning point for the Vilnius Center for Psychotraumatology (PTC) headed by prof. dr. Evaldas Kazlauskas. The year was marked with an official establishment of the Center, also the year was fruitful of research output, and new exciting initiatives. This is a brief overview of the last year’s PTC activities, followed by the full 2018 Annual Report.

After almost two decades of research in the field of psychotraumatology in Lithuania, Center for Psychotraumatology at the Institute of Psychology, Vilnius University, was established in March 2018. Center for Psychotraumatology aims to be the leading research excellence center of psychotrauma and stress-related disorders in the Baltic region. Besides building the infrastructure of the Center, priority in 2018 was given to establishing collaborations with other leading trauma research centers across Europe, and joining European collaborative psychotrauma research centers network. Collaboration with Norwegian Center of Violence and Trauma (NKVTS) was started, also collaboration with Danish National Center of Center for Psychotraumatology (prof. A. Elklit) was renewed. Collaboration agreement was signed with Arq Psychotrauma Expert Group, the leading psychotrauma center in the Netherlands. Long lasting collaboration with Division of Psychopathology and Clinical Intervention, University of Zurich lead by prof. A. Maercker was very important for us.

We at Vilnius Center for Psychotraumatology were proud of the achievements of the current staff, and inspired by the new excellent members. A recognition of psychotraumatology was marked with a new position of professor of clinical psychology (with specialization in psychotraumatology). The Head of the Center prof. dr. E. Kazlauskas was appointed to this position. We were proud that postdoc researcher dr. Paulina Zelviene received the honorable National Award for Young Scientists in Social and Humanitarian Sciences from the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences.
Introduction

Dr. J. Eimontas completed PhD studies and received his doctoral degree with a dissertation on internet-delivered interventions. A new PhD position was established via grant from the Research Council of Lithuania (RCL), and experienced clinical psychologist Ieva Daniunaite joined our adolescence study. We also have an internship program, which was funded by RCL, and intern Monika Kvedaraite successfully joined our research team.

Year 2018 was productive in research output. We were lucky enough to have our publications accepted in major traumatic stress journals, the *Journal of Traumatic Stress* and *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*. We also had more research output in collaboration with our partners from other institutions. We aimed to a more complex research designs, with longitudinal and cross-cultural studies as our priorities in 2018. While in 2018 we did not conduct intervention studies, we were still analyzing data from the previous trials, and planning future interventions studies. We focused more on a developmental process of trauma and stress-related disorders, and started planning a longitudinal study of adolescence trauma and resilience, data collection for this study will start in 2019.

We expect to maintain the growth of the Center of Psychotraumatology in the year 2019. We aim to strengthen our international collaborations. Our main projects will be focused on the large adolescence study in Lithuania, and also study in collaboration with University Hospital on psychological effects of heart surgery or other diseases.

*Prof. dr. Evaldas Kazlauskas*
The Center has a long-term expertise in psychotraumatology, which is reflected in a number of conducted research projects, published scientific papers, national and international collaboration. The main research focus of the Vilnius Center for Psychotraumatology is on disorders specifically associated with stress. The Center is involved in research on the resilience and risk factors of the stress-related disorders, development and evaluation of psychosocial interventions. The Center is led by prof. dr. Evaldas Kazlauskas.

**Mission**

Acknowledgment of the effects of trauma on individuals and society by providing evidence-based knowledge of trauma responses for development of care for trauma survivors.

**Vision**

Leading psychotraumatology research excellence center in the region conducting high quality trauma-related research.

**Areas of expertise**

Psychotraumatology; stress-related disorders: posttraumatic stress disorder, complex posttraumatic stress disorder, adjustment disorder; psychological assessment; evaluation of psychosocial interventions; treatment studies; internet-based interventions; resilience; effects of political violence and oppression.
Core staff members

Prof. dr. Evaldas Kazlauskas is a clinical psychologist, and a leading expert of stress-related disorders in Lithuania. He is the Head of Center for Psychotraumatology at Vilnius University. Evaldas has been involved in psychotraumatology research and clinical practice since 2000. He is a board member of the European Society for Traumatic Stress Studies, and President of the Lithuanian Society for Traumatic Stress Studies.

Dr. Paulina Zelviene is a clinical psychologist and one of the leading new generation psychology researchers in the Baltic region. Paulina is currently a postdoctoral research fellow at the Center for Psychotraumatology, Vilnius University. Scientific achievements of Paulina have been recently acknowledged by the Lithuanian Academy of Science – for an exceptional research she received 2018 Award for Young Scientists from the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences.

Dr. Neringa Grigutyte is a clinical psychologist and received her PhD from Vilnius University with a focus on effects of childhood sexual abuse. Neringa participated in a number of national and international research projects. She is a current President of the Lithuanian Psychological Association.
PhD students


Students

Agne Madeikytė  Jogile Medeisiene  Miglė Rudyte
Gintare Astrauskaite  Karolina Jocytė  Ruta Budreckyte
Gintare Korsakaite  Karolina Maceviciute  Saule Makutenaite
Ieva Stonyte  Lukas Juozapavicius  Vaiva Milasiunaite

Interns

Monika Kvedaraite, since June, 2018
Leonora Engelbach (Germany) Ferbruary-April, 2018

Staff exchange

September, 2018. Dr. P. Zelviene was on a two week scientific visit to Norwegian Center for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS), University of Oslo.

May, 2018. Prof. dr. E. Kazlauskas was on a two week scientific visit to National Center for Psychotraumatology, University of Southern Denmark.
International collaborations

- Arq Psychotrauma Expert Group, The Netherlands
- Danish National Centre for Psychotraumatology, University of Southern Denmark
- Division of Clinical Psychopathology and Intervention, University of Zurich, Switzerland
- Internet, health and clinical psychology research group, Linköping university, Sweden
- Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies, University of Oslo
- StressLab, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Poland
- European Society for Traumatic Stress Studies

Research projects

- The structure of ICD-11 trauma syndroms and psychometric properties of the International Trauma Questionnaire (ITQ) in Lithuanian population
- Long-term effects on health-related quality of life and stress-related disorders after heart surgery
- Effects of childhood trauma and resilience in adolescence
- Cross-cultural study of trauma adversity and resilience metaphors
- Vilnius ICD-11 Adjustment Disorder Study

Research grants

PostDoc research project ‘Effects of Childhood Trauma: Stress and Resilience’ (STAR-A) (2017–2019). This research is funded by the European Social Fund under the No 09.3.3-LMT-K-712-02-0096 ‘Development of Competences of Scientists, other Researchers and Students through Practical Research Activities’ measure. PI dr. P. Zelviene, scientific advisor prof. dr. E. Kazlauskas. Project budget 42,502 EUR.

Student internship research project ‘**Traumatic experiences and post-traumatic stress responses in the context of development**’ (2018-2019). This research is funded by the European Social Fund under the No 09.3.3-LMT-K-712 ‘Development of Competences of Scientists, other Researchers and Students through Practical Research Activities’ measure. Student M. Kvedaraite, supervisor prof. dr. E. Kazlauskas.

Student internship research project ‘**Violence against women: posttraumatic stress risk factors**’ (2018). This research was funded by the European Social Fund under the No 09.3.3- LMT-K-712 ‘Development of Competences of Scientists, other Researchers and Students through Practical Research Activities’ measure. Student M. Kvedaraite, supervisor prof. dr. E. Kazlauskas.

**Submitted grants proposals**

COST action proposal (submitted). ‘**European network on health and social responses to terrorist attacks**’ (Respond). Number of partner institutions - 27.


Referred journal articles


**Book chapters**

Conference presentations


Conference presentations


Training and clinical services

Training

These trainings for mental health professionals are provided at the Center:

- Assessment of trauma-related disorders;
- Training workshops on trauma-focused treatments.

Clinical services

These outpatient services are available at the Center:

- Assessment of trauma exposure and trauma-related disorders;
- Evidence based trauma-focused treatments.